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Thursdays 3:30-6:30
Office hours: T 9-11, Th 2:30-3:30

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CAS HI 200
THE HISTORIAN'S CRAFT:
TWENTIETH-CENTURY GERMANY

COURSE DESCRIPTION This class makes use of the rich historiography of twentieth-century Germany to examine different methodological approaches to the writing of history. The course considers the how historians represent the past by exploring major themes in German history since 1914, from the consequences of the First World War and the Nazi takeover to the division and unification of Germany. Particular emphasis will be placed on epistemological problems related to the construction of narrative, including the distinction between fact and value and the difference between experience and discourse. In keeping with its mission to acquaint students with a variety of historical approaches, this course focuses on writing itself. Students will be asked to write a number of short papers in order to improve their general writing skills and their history writing in particular.

REQUIREMENTS This course is a colloquium, which means that attendance is required and participation in class discussion is essential. **Class participation** includes substantive analysis of the assigned texts, engaging your peers in constructive debate, and demonstrating a willingness to make mistakes. Making mistakes is integral to learning; it is only through mistakes that you can deepen your understanding of the subject. For this reason, you will not be graded on the content of what you say, but rather on how much you contribute constructively to the class.

You will be also asked to write a **two page *précis*** almost every week. The purpose of the *précis* is to hone your writing skills and help you think historically. The *précis* should identify a **specific** argument of the book, evaluate the kinds of evidence presented to support those arguments, and then assess how effective the book is in articulating a given problem and how compelling you find the book's interpretation. Since you only have two pages in which to accomplish this task, you should avoid trying to generalize about the entire book. Instead, focus on one or two examples drawn from the book that struck you as insightful or problematic, evaluate the kind of evidence offered, explain whether it supports the claims made, and suggest whether the example you have chosen is representative of the author's approach. The *précis* is **not a book review**, but rather a close reading of a specific passage intended to reveal the methodology, source base, or kind of argument a book makes.

In addition to the *précis*, students will be required to write one **book review**, due on March 6. The aim of this assignment is to introduce students to book reviews appearing in scholarly journals, and provide students with some experience in the art of writing a review of a historical work. You will be asked to select a monograph you have read for the course to review, then find at least one professional book review from a scholarly journal. After you have read the scholarly review (and get the hang of how historians review books), write your own five-page review, and turn it in **along with a copy of the review you selected**.

The last assignment, due at the end of the course, is a **research proposal** with a bibliography. Students are asked to identify an a theme or event they think is under-researched, then construct a

5-page proposal that articulates the reasons the area is of interest to other scholars, summarizes existing research, and discusses the methodologies and sources most appropriate to your argument. In addition, you will be asked to append a 2-3-page bibliography of primary and secondary sources relevant to the research project. A brief description of your intended project, aimed at making sure that you begin thinking about it early on, is due on **April 3**.

CHEATING Cheating is a serious infraction of scholarly conduct, and will earn an automatic F for the course. **Cheating includes plagiarism**, which is defined as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without appropriate acknowledgment. Plagiarism includes three words or more in order taken from a source without attribution. Please read the Boston University Academic Conduct Code carefully, and the section on plagiarism in particular.

GRADES Grades are based by your performance on the following required assignments:

Class participation:	15 percent
Ten <i>précis</i>	50 percent
One five-page book review (March 6):	15 percent
Two page description (April 3)/Research paper proposal (May 1):	20 percent

Please turn papers in on time. “On time” means at the beginning of class on the day they are due. **No extensions** will be granted. Late papers will be marked down one third of a letter grade per day.

READINGS

Required Texts: The following books are available for purchase at Barnes and Noble BU. Some are on reserve in the library. I also own extra copies that you can borrow.

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*

Allan Bullock, *A Study in Tyranny*

Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*

Michael Schermer and Alex Grobman, *Denying History*

Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*

Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale, Vol. 1*

Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale*

Judd Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism*

S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-1955*

James Young, *At Memory's Edge*

Suggested Reading

This course assumes some (but not too much) familiarity with the contours of modern German history. If you have never taken a course on European or German history, or wish to refresh your knowledge of the country's history, I suggest you do some supplementary reading. Dietrich Orlow's *A History of Modern Germany* provides a clear and concise overview. Mary Fulbrook's *The Divided Nation* gives a fuller account from a different political perspective. If you are interested digging deeper into specific topics, feel free to consult with me.

January 17: **Introduction**

Film screening: Robert Wiene, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), 74 minutes

January 24: **Imperial Germany: German Exceptionalism**

Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale*

First two-page *précis* due

February 7: **World War I: History vs. Story**

Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*

Second two-page *précis* due

February 14: **World War I: Economics and History**

The Treaty of Versailles, online at: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/menu.htm>

*John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (excerpts)

Third two-page *précis* due

February 21: **The Problem of Authority in Central Europe: Fiction and Non-Fiction**

*Franz Kafka, "In the Penal Colony" and "Before the Law"

*Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in Gerth and Mills, 129-56

James J. Sheehan, "What is German History? Reflections on the Role of the Nation in German History," *The Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981), 1-23 (JSTOR)

Fourth two-page *précis* due

February 28: **Hitler: Biography**

Allan Bullock, *A Study in Tyranny*

Fifth two-page *précis* due

March 6: **The War against the Jews: Nature or Nurture?**

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*

*Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*

Film screening: Stanley Milgram, *Obedience* (1965), 45 minutes

Five-page book review due

March 13: Spring Break – no class

March 20: **The Holocaust and History: Memoirs**

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

Art Spiegelman, *Maus*, volume I

Sixth two-page *précis* due

March 27: **Historical Continuities: Gender and Music**

Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*

Seventh two-page *précis* due

April 3: **Germany Divided: Urban History**

Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin*

Film screening: Billy Wilder, *Eins-Zwei-Drei* (1961)

Two-page description of research project due

April 10: **West Germany: Business History**

S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past*

Eighth two-page précis due

April 17: **East Germany: Consumer History**

Judd Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism*

Ninth two-page précis due

April 24: **Holocaust Denial: What is a Fact?**

Shermer and Grobman, *Denying History*

Tenth two-page précis due

May 1: **Representing the Past: Art History**

James Young, *At Memory's Edge*

Five-page research proposal due